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Trends in Communist Media

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Secretary Bodrov, a much lower-ranking official, had received an Order of Lenin on his 60th birthday. In presenting the award on 5 January, Brezhnev had no words of praise for Deatchev, although he did praise Sushlov and Ogarkov. Deatchev's career has been in eclipse since he was demoted from Central Committee secretary for ideology to culture minister in late 1974. He has, however, retained the higher post of Politburo candidate member, and since 1974 there have been no notable protocol slights that would indicate any further decline in his status.

Chief of Staff and First Deputy Defense Minister Ogarkov, whose 60th birthday awards were announced at the end of October, was specifically favored by receiving not only an Order of Lenin but also the Hero of the Soviet Union title. In recent years other first deputy defense ministers such as Volchikov and Schokov received only Orders of Lenin on their 60th birthdays. Ogarkov's favored standing has been clear since he was placed ahead of the other, more senior first deputy minister, V.G. Kulikov. In protocol listings shortly after his promotion to first deputy in 1976,

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MOSCOW-HAVANA ON CHILEAN PLEBISCITE: Soviet and Cuban communists have condemned the holding of the 6 January plebiscite in which the Chilean electorate, by a three-to-one vote, endorsed President Pinochet's military government. There is as yet no available post-plebiscite comment from Moscow, but prior to the vote, Soviet media had seemed of two minds as to whether to support abstention from such an electoral "farce" or to press for a negative vote. Thus Moscow on the one hand said that, with dissent stifled in Chile, the referendum should be dismissed as a staged event "whose outcome is predetermined." At the same time, Moscow reported extensively on opposition to the plebiscite which was voiced in Chile, and TASS publicized a Chilean Communist Party statement urging Chileans to vote against the Pinochet government and thus "make still another step forward" toward toppling the regime. As if hedging its bets, though, TASS noted the Chilean party's request that, if Chileans were not going to cast a negative vote, they should "abstain" from the plebiscite, which was "a farce." For its part, Havana said little before the voting took place, but once the results were announced, an authoritative "Our America" commentary broadcast over Havana's international service on 6 January, blessed the Santiago Government for holding a referendum in a "situation where democratic rights are completely lacking," Havana rejected the possibility of getting a true reading of Chilean public opinion in such circumstances and expressed confidence that the outside world would not be deceived by President Pinochet's "rigged and ridiculous plebiscite."

SCHMIDT VISIT TO ROMANIA: The joint declaration issued on FBI Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's visit to Romania on 6-7 January—the first to Romania by a West German chancellor—expressed "satisfaction" with the good relations existing between the two countries, registered an agreement on most international issues, and reported the extension to Bucharest of a large trade circuit. Although the declaration contained only a bland reference to problems posed by the large ethnic German population in Romania, Schmidt indicated that some Romanian assurances regarding emigration had been made. In an interview with Palme TV on 7 January, not publicized by Bucharest media, he said that Romania agreed to sustain the current rate of family reunification of its ethnic Germans—a record 10,000 cases approved in 1977—during the next two years. Bucharest's customary toughness regarding its treatment of its minorities was reflected by Romanian leader Ceausescu in a dinner speech on the 6th, reported by AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE the next day, in which he asserted that Romania's Germans were enjoying "equal rights" under Bucharest's "just, humanitarian" nationalities policy.

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